



## Commission Clues – August 2005 News of the Montana Commission on Community Service

*Service is a Habit of the Heart*

Genuine politics -- even politics worthy of the name -- the only politics I am willing to devote myself to -- is simply a matter of serving those around us: serving the community and serving those who will come after us. Its deepest roots are moral because it is a responsibility expressed through action, to and for the whole. — Vaclav Havel

### New Commissioners Welcomed!

Governor Brian Schweitzer appointed nine new Commissioners and re-appointed three incumbent Commissioners in early July. Six of the freshman class and six incumbents gathered later that month for two days of orientation and strategic planning near Seeley Lake at the University of Montana Conference Center on Salmon Lake. They were joined by Office of Community Service staff: Will Soller (Deputy Director and Grants Administrator), Shannon Stober (Training Specialist) and Margaret MacDonald (Executive Director). Project TASC consultant and facilitator Justine Murray, who has guided the Commission in its last two strategic planning retreats, facilitated the planning process.

The gathering provided an excellent opportunity to welcome new commissioners and bring them up to speed rapidly in the complexities and the wonderful work of AmeriCorps programs in Montana

### New Commissioners:

- **Johnel Barcus** – (Browning). Johnel is an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Tribe. She holds a doctorate in education from Montana State University and is the Executive Director of the Browning Community Development Corporation.
- **Amy Busch** – (Broadview). Amy brings years of experience as a Senior Corps program director in Ravalli County, and then Richland County. She has also been a leader in establishing Citizen Corps chapters in Eastern Montana. She and her family have recently relocated to Broadview where her husband is Superintendent of Schools.
- **Robert E. “Bob” Harris** – (Great Falls) Bob is retired from the U.S. Air Force and operates a small gravel hauling business. He is very active in youth-related community activities, including Boy Scouts, United Way, Red Cross, and Safe Communities Coalition. Bob has been active with the NAACP.
- **John Ilgenfritz** – (Helena) John works for Disaster and Emergency Services at the Dept. of Military Affairs on Homeland Security grants. He is also a former VISTA.
- **Keith Kelly** – (Helena) Keith is the Commissioner of the Dept. of Labor and Industry. His long and distinguished career in public service includes a Directorship of the Montana Dept. of Agriculture, and the USDA Farmers Home Administration in Washington, DC.
- **Tracy King** – (Harlem) Tracy is the Assiniboine Tribal Representative to the Ft. Belknap Tribal Council. He also has a long history of advocacy and direct service with at-risk youth in his community.
- **Pat Murphy** – (Hamilton) Pat recently retired as a staff member of Literacy Corps and now works part-time for the University of Montana as adviser of the Ursa Major a student leadership development organization. She also worked for the Kids First program in Hamilton.

- **Lindsey Rehder** – (Missoula) Lindsey is a VISTA member working with the Montana Literacy Corps and Women's Opportunity and Resource Development (WORD) in Missoula. She fills the youth and member of national service seat on the Commission, succeeding **Erin Butts** (who has moved to Alaska!).
- **Sheila Rice** – (Great Falls) Sheila is director of Neighborhood Housing Services, a nonprofit housing agency, promoting fairness and access to affordable housing. She is a former legislator.

**John Allen** (Helena) of the Corporation for National and Community Service state office was reappointed, as were **Mike McGinley** (Dillon), Beaverhead County Commissioner, and **Bob Maffit** (Helena) Executive Director of the Montana Independent Living Project.

**Bea Ann Melichar** (Billings) and **Sherry Stevens Wulf** (Kalispell) completed their service to Montana, concluding six years and nine years, respectively, of active participation and work on the Commission.

**Welcome Kathy Bean!** The Office of Community Service welcomes our new disabilities outreach coordinator Kathy Bean on Monday, August 29 as she begins work at a newly constituted position. Kathy will work with Montana's AmeriCorps programs and other national service partners to enhance and support opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in national service in Montana (and elsewhere). She will also build relationships with persons with disabilities and organizations or agencies who serve their needs as a tool for recruiting members.

Kathy comes to us from Helena Industries where she currently teaches adults with disabilities. She has more than ten years of professional experience working with children and adults with disabilities.

In addition to outreach to persons with disabilities, Kathy will be helping the Office of Community Service in a number of administrative tasks.

Kathy's number on the state system will be 406.444.5547 and her e-mail address will be [kbean@mt.gov](mailto:kbean@mt.gov) (please wait until September to send her a note!)

## Upcoming Events!

**Community Building Institute – Aug. 30-31, Sept. 1 – Helena** is fully subscribed with 120 registered. (The next CBI will take place in February or March, 2006.) Working with a cross-stream planning committee of National Service programs in Montana, the Commission is refining a model for community building and capacity building training that is catching attention nationally. OCS Training Specialist Shannon Stober, herself a former VISTA and Team Leader, has worked to combine the excellent tools and resources developed at the University of Kansas Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development (including an interactive web-site) with a cadre of skilled and experienced Montana trainers to make a dynamic and adaptive training event.

The primary audience for CBI are VISTA's and their site supervisors. It also serves AmeriCorps team leaders, staff and sites. CBI provides an excellent resource for Montana non-profits and service agencies, and its wider utilization may help build sustainability and matching income to support and expand high quality training statewide.

## **Creating Community in the Rockies – The Governors Conference on Civic Engagement – October 3 - Missoula**

This daylong summit will lift up for analysis and discussion models for best practices in leadership development, community service, and civic engagement around Montana and the region. AmeriCorps State Program Directors are preparing a luncheon program highlighting the work of Montana's AmeriCorps members. The day will be capped with a dynamic town meeting dialogue with **Governor Brian Schweitzer** debriefing the panel and workshop participants on good ideas for communities and civic engagement. For more information, or to register, please go to <http://www.mt.gov/mcsn/> and click on the links.

The 6:30 p.m. banquet will highlight **the Governor's Awards for Civic Engagement** (nominations close Aug. 26!) honoring Montanans who have modeled community service and civic engagement in several categories. The evening speaker will be **Hal J. Stearns**, noted speaker and western

historian, telling the stories of Montana Profiles in Community Courage.

### **AmeriCorps Rulemaking complete!**

After extensive public involvement, regional meetings, conference calls, an initial draft rule, and another round of meetings and conference calls and comments, the Corporation for National and Community Service formally adopted new rules on July 1, 2005, with a unanimous vote of the Board. The new rules will begin to take effect this Fall as programs apply for funding for their 2006 program year. The Montana Commission will work closely with its programs to help support them as they adapt to the new rules. The new rules will affect matching requirements over time. Also, cost per member will become an increasing factor in competitive review of applications, which may negatively affect the competitiveness of rural or widely dispersed programs.

**Conservation Nation film:** Montana Conservation Corps is participating in the filming of a pilot for Jeff Corwin's (the Animal Planet guy) new show, Conservation Nation. The weekend of August 27-28, a crew from Kalispell, joined by a group of YES program volunteers from Missoula, will be helping to construct an aviary and nesting boxes on a project with the Montana Waterfowl Foundation. This will be part of a segment of the show with a conservation "makeover" focus. This is pretty exciting for MCC. The expected viewer audience is 12-15 million. Though MCC is not the focus of the program, we will have some good visibility and recognition which should help a bit with recruitment. Thanks to Cliff, Bobby, and Chase for their help coordinating this, and to their crews volunteering on a weekend to help us pull this off. —*Jono McKinney, Montana Conservation Corps Program Director*

### **Sixty-seven Presidential Freedom**

**Scholarships in 2005** - Corporation for National and Community Service CEO David Eisner notified Gov. Brian Schweitzer this week that 67 Montana high school students are recipients of the \$1,000 Presidential Freedom Scholarships for their outstanding leadership and commitment to community service. Winners must have completed at least 100 hours of community

service, either through a school-based service-learning program or independently through service at a nonprofit or faith-based organization. Each high school and Boys and Girls Club of America had the opportunity to select up to two recipients. The CNCS matches \$500 raised in the community to provide the \$1,000 scholarship.

Montana could probably significantly increase the number of students who benefit from this great opportunity, with a concerted outreach to our secondary school administrators and school guidance counselors. While the Corporation promotes the program after January, we can be talking to Principals and School Boards all year long, so they are laying the groundwork to identify students with exemplary service records and also find local partners willing to match the federal \$500 contribution.

### **UM Named "College with a Conscience"**

In March, Princeton Review and Campus Compact announced that the University of Montana had been selected as one of 81 "Colleges with a Conscience" in the U.S. UM is highlighted in a two-page spread in a book published June 21. Over 900 schools were scrutinized in making the selections. The criteria were: admissions practices and use of scholarships to reward community service; support for service learning programs; student activism and student voice in governance; and the level of civic engagement in the student body.

UM's Office of Civic Engagement (OCE) contributes to that distinction by offering students, faculty and staff increased opportunities for community service. Through service learning classes, student-run volunteer programs, AmeriCorps national service programs, and an online volunteer listings database, OCE makes it easier for members of the campus community to become actively engaged in service.

The book can be found on-line at <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/research/conscience/default.asp>.

### **Learn and Serve Montana Has a New**

**Website!** The site has updated program information, great links to service learning

Montana news, and much more. To visit the site, simply use the following link:  
<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/LearnServe/index.html>

**Administrative Standards Review** – The Office of Community Service hosted five CNCS employees and contractors the week of Aug. 15-19 who were conducting a detailed review using the latest tool adopted to assess the quality of state Commissions' administrative practices and systems. During the weeklong visit, the team visited with Commissioners, programs, and state agencies that house or offer support services to the Office of Community Service. The visit also included extensive interviews with OCS staff, and hours of poring through documentation of compliance.

We are deeply grateful to Commissioners **George Dennison, Nancy Coopersmith, John Allen, Erik Burke, and John Ilgenfritz** for participating in the interview process. Also Commissioner of Labor **Keith Kelly** and Governor's Chief of Staff **Bruce Nelson** gave generously from their busy schedules to participate in interviews with team members. Special thanks, as well, go to our program directors in hosting visits from team members: **Jeanne Moon and Laura Fellin**. And last, but certainly not least, Dept. of Labor Fiscal Support Division staff **Michelle Marsh, Brenda Bokovoy, and Bernie Warren** were most helpful in preparing us in advance and sharing time during the visit to assist in the overview.

**Commission Clues** is distributed bi-monthly by electronic mail and posted on the Commission website [www.mt.gov/mcsn]. Please feel free to forward, print or copy this newsletter!

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#### **Look for Main Street!**

The Department of Labor and Industry is rolling out its newly refurbished magazine **Main Street Montana**, which will go to 40,000 employers in its first run. This issue showcases a Montana community, its economy and ties to DLI programs and services. The first community featured in this new format is Red Lodge, so one of the articles tells the story of Montana Conservation Corps and its work in the Red Lodge area, including when a Billings crew was called on short notice to tunnel into the Beartooth Nature Center so animals could be cared for after an immense Spring snowfall.

Look for this and other interesting stories in your mail-box soon.

#### **Leadership Montana**

Commission Executive Director Margie MacDonald begins her yearlong adventure as one of forty Leadership Montana Class of 2006 inductees, with the orientation session in Big Sky Montana on Sept. 7-9.

"I foresee all kinds of strategic partnership possibilities with this year's class and the overall Leadership Montana organization which is so dedicated to building leaders dedicated to community service and civic engagement. I expect to observe synergy in action as the program year unfolds," Margie said.